



Family and Childcare Trust

Creating a family friendly UK

Holiday Childcare Survey 2014

Jill Rutter and
Duncan Lugton

At a cost of £100 million a year to the UK economy, nearly a million working days are lost as one in five parents are forced away from work to cover childcare over the holidays.



Sponsored by

Computershare
Voucher Services



Executive summary and areas for action

Last summer I had to leave my 16 year old to look after my seven year old because I couldn't afford the childcare. Not great thing to do for either of them. I just wish there were more jobs that offered school hours.
(Yasmin, mother of two).

Every year the Family and Childcare Trust conducts a survey to gather information about the cost of holiday childcare and its availability across Britain. The data – collected from local authorities – makes it possible to monitor changes in the costs and availability of childcare during school holiday periods and identifies differences in provision across the regions and nations of Britain. This year we have also undertaken an additional survey of parents, to help us understand their experiences of holiday childcare. The results of both surveys are included in this report which complements our annual survey of childcare costs that we release every spring.

This year's Holiday Childcare Survey, the 13th in the series, is released at a time of heightened debate around the cost of childcare among politicians, as well as the configuration of the school year. While some parents are lucky and have access to high quality affordable holiday childcare, our results show that many families face a holiday childcare lottery of high costs and patchy provision. Despite the legal obligations to provide enough childcare for working parents, only 27 per cent of English local authorities and 6 per cent in Wales have enough provision for this group of families and these gaps have increased rather than decreased since the implementation of the Childcare Act 2006. All this takes a toll on families, with nearly one in five (17 per cent) of parents in our survey taking sick leave over the holiday period in order to provide childcare.

Key findings

Childcare costs

▶ During the school holidays about one in five of all families with children under 12 use holiday childcare provided by holiday clubs or play schemes, with 78 per cent of this provision run by private, voluntary and independent (PVI) organisations. The remaining 22 per cent of provision is run by local authorities, schools and other maintained (public) sector organisations.

- ▶ In Britain the average cost of one week's full-time (50 hours) of holiday childcare is now £114.51.
- ▶ The South East of England is the region with the most expensive holiday childcare.
- ▶ The most expensive holiday club cost £530 per week.
- ▶ In all areas parents face large differences in prices for holiday childcare, with an average price difference of £111.22 per week between the cheapest and the most expensive holiday childcare.
- ▶ Maintained sector provision cost an average of £96.04 per week, compared with £118.65 per week in the PVI sector. These price differences are a result of subsidies and because holiday clubs provided by local authorities and schools often have access to free premises and equipment.
- ▶ Holiday childcare is 1.7 per cent more expensive than in 2013. Prices have fallen by 3.1 per cent in the maintained sector and risen by 2.7 per cent in the PVI sector.
- ▶ Since 2009 the price of holiday childcare in the PVI sector has risen by 21 per cent, with an increase of 17 per cent in the price of maintained provision.

The availability of holiday childcare

- ▶ Under the Childcare Act 2006 all local authorities in England and Wales have a legal obligation to ensure sufficient childcare for working parents and those undertaking training. Despite this, only 27 per cent of English local authorities and 6 per cent of those in Wales had enough holiday childcare for parents who worked full-time.
- ▶ Parents of children over 11, families who live in rural areas and those with disabled children face the most acute shortages of holiday childcare. Only 15 per cent of local authorities in England and 6 per cent of those in Wales had enough childcare for disabled children.

Executive summary and areas for action

- ▶ Gaps in provision have increased rather than decreased since the implementation of the Childcare Act 2006, with 49 per cent of English local authorities having enough childcare for working parents in 2009, compared with 27 per cent today.
- ▶ There has been a fall in the number of PVI providers in 35 per cent of local authorities in England over the last 12 months. This has been offset to a small extent by a 24 per cent increase in school and local authority provision since 2013, although this sector generally offers less provision than the PVI sector.
- ▶ The legal duty on local authorities in Scotland to ensure sufficient childcare is weaker than in England and Wales. In Scotland only nine local authorities out of the 26 that responded to the survey had information about the sufficiency of their holiday childcare.
- ▶ Parents often found it hardest to cater for 12-14 year olds, who still require supervision, but for whom holiday clubs may not be appropriate.
- ▶ Not all parents have employers who are sympathetic to parents' caring obligations, with 28 per cent of survey respondents reporting their employer refusing a request to change work arrangements over the holidays. The least-well qualified parents were more likely to report an unsympathetic boss, suggesting that more highly qualified parents have greater negotiating power with their employer.
- ▶ A lack of holiday childcare had forced parents into courses of action that risked damaging their career prospects and finances, with 25 per cent reporting they had been forced to cut their hours of work during school holidays. Some 12 per cent of parents had given up a job because they could not find holiday childcare.

Family experiences of holiday childcare

- ▶ Parents describe a holiday childcare lottery of large differences in prices and gaps in provision, with 35 per cent of parents in our survey saying it was difficult to find holiday childcare they could afford. Some 28 per cent of parents reported difficulties finding holiday childcare at a convenient location.
- ▶ Some 17 per cent of parents said they had taken days off sick to cover holiday childcare. One day missed to cover childcare every year represents over 900,000 lost working days and costs the UK economy nearly £100 million every year.

Table One: The weekly cost of holiday childcare across Britain, 2014

Region/nation	Maintained (school, local authority) sector holiday club or play scheme	Private, voluntary and independent sector holiday club or play scheme	Average weighted costs
East of England	£92.81	£115.65	£111.13
East Midlands	£100.92	£134.98	£128.44
Greater London	£86.20	£124.34	£111.78
North East	£97.10	£117.04	£114.68
North West	£101.50	£105.50	£103.38
South East	£113.08	£148.23	£140.88
South West	£97.47	£116.20	£112.25
West Midlands	£105.51	£108.64	£108.00
Yorkshire and Humberside	£95.01	£116.41	£115.12
England (Regional Average)	£98.79	£120.78	£116.18
Wales	£63.75	£116.28	£109.66
Scotland	£103.52	£101.87	£104.28
Britain average	£96.04	£118.65	£114.51

Source: Family and Childcare Trust Holiday Childcare Survey, 2014

Executive summary and areas for action



Areas for action

Holiday childcare is an essential service for many families, enabling them to juggle their caring obligations, work and leave during the school holidays. It also has a wider economic impact as it enables parents to work and employers to have dependable labour force who can be relied on to turn up for their jobs. Despite the importance of holiday childcare, too many families struggle to find local provision that they can afford. This situation is not improving, rather, gaps in provision are worsening, although there is a legal duty on local authorities to ensure sufficient childcare.

While childcare has risen up the political agenda, the focus has been on the under-fives. The results of our 2014 surveys have led us to conclude that the childcare needs of families with school-age children must be given higher priority. The Family and Childcare Trust calls on the Government to consider these areas for action:

- ▶ The Government should take action to ensure that all parents benefit from family friendly work by putting in place an information campaign for parents on their rights and entitlements at work.
- ▶ Where there is insufficient holiday childcare, central government should help local authorities fill these gaps and work with parents hold them to account if they fail to do so.

- ▶ In England, local authorities and the Education Funding Agency should work with schools to make sure their premises and facilities are used to provide childcare and activities over holiday periods.
- ▶ In England, the Department for Education should work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office to ensure sufficient de facto childcare for older children.
- ▶ We call for similar action in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- ▶ The Government should commit to a new childcare strategy covering under-fives and children of school age. As part of this, it should set up an independent review of childcare funding that delivers the affordable and accessible childcare that parents and employers need.

After working hard and getting promoted I am now worse off because I don't get tax credits (Helen, mother of two).

I work in education so it's a bit easier for me but I still have problems as I don't have the same holiday times as my kids if it wasn't for my mum I wouldn't cope (Kate, mother of three).

Background



The summer holidays are just a nightmare. I can't afford a holiday club for more than a week, so we have to cobble together childcare for the other five weeks. We take a week's holiday then me and my husband share out our remaining leave. The kids go to their grandparents, but that still leaves us a week to cover. It's stressful and expensive and I worry about getting overdrawn in August (Nina, mother of two).

School holidays, particularly the long summer holidays, present challenges to working parents. Schools and school-based nurseries are closed and parents resort to many different strategies to find childcare in the holidays. A lucky few have employers who support flexible working, for example, term-time only contracts. Many parents also resort to 'shift parenting' where they split their own annual leave and take it in turns to look after their children. Informal childcare from relatives and friends is also important, with the most recent Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents showing that 41 per cent of working families with children under 15 used informal childcare over the school holidays, most usually provided by grandparents (Department for Education, 2014a).

But not all families can rely on shift parenting or informal childcare provided by relatives and friends. About a quarter of parents also use formal childcare during the holiday period, in the form of childminders and holiday clubs that provide activities for nine or ten hours every day. For older children, open access play schemes, sports camps and holiday activities run by museums, orchestras, theatre projects and other cultural organisations often function as de facto childcare.

The importance of affordable formal holiday childcare has been recognised by successive governments which have acted to make holiday childcare more affordable and more available to working parents. In

Background

In 1998 the *National Childcare Strategy*¹ committed the Government to increasing the availability and affordability of early childhood education and childcare in England and Wales. A further ten-year childcare strategy was published in 2004 which paved the way for the Childcare Act 2006. This legislation obliges all English and Welsh local authorities to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for working parents and those undertaking training or education with the intention of returning to work. Wales has also had its own Childcare Strategies. At present there is no equivalent legislation in Scotland, although the Early Years' Framework (2008) requires that local authorities have 'a strategic view of childcare accessibility' and has a longer-term objective that families have 'access to integrated pre-school and childcare services in every community matched to an assessment of local demand'.

As a consequence of this action, the number of childcare places has expanded dramatically in all parts of Britain. By 2011 there were 339,300 holiday childcare places delivered by 7,900 providers in England. This represents a 179 per cent increase in places and a 182 per cent rise in the number of providers since 2003 when there were just 121,700 places.

Alongside moves to increase the availability of childcare, a number of initiatives have also helped make childcare more affordable. The current infrastructure of support includes the subsidy of parents' childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. In April 2014 an estimated eight per cent of UK families with dependent children under 12 – 436,000 families in total – received help with their childcare costs through the tax credit system (HMRC, 2014). At present working parents on low incomes can receive up to 70 per cent of their childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, up to a maximum cost of £175 per week for one child in childcare and £300 per week for two or more children. This means that a family can receive up to £122.50 help with childcare costs for one child and up to £210 for two or more children. These levels were set in 2005 and have not been updated since then, despite big increases in childcare costs over this period. Moreover, it is only the most deprived working families that receive this type of help, as the childcare payment starts to taper off steeply if the first earner in a household earns more than £15,910 per

year before tax and National Insurance are deducted. After this threshold, the level of tax credit support is reduced by 41 pence for every additional £1 that is earned. This means that there are many families on modest incomes – £25,000 – £35,000 gross household income per year – who are getting little or no help with their childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

Another problem with the childcare element of Working Tax Credit is that the support system does not work well for parents whose childcare costs or incomes vary from week to week. Changes in salaries, or increases in childcare costs, as often happens during the school holidays, have to be reported to HMRC. This can be demanding for parents with low levels of literacy or limited fluency in English. In the past the HMRC has made mistakes in deciding tax credit payments and in April 2014 there were still 1.15 million live cases of underpayment or overpayment of tax credits, with many of them relating to childcare costs (HMRC, 2014).

Tax credits are now being merged into the single Universal Credit. Within Universal Credit the overall maximum support levels for childcare costs of £175 or £300 per week will remain, although these will be now calculated monthly. However, in April 2016 all families receiving Universal Credit will get up to 85 per cent of their childcare costs paid, up from 70 per cent today. Universal Credit will also be administered online and these two changes will enable greater flexibility for parents whose childcare costs fluctuate from week to week. This is particularly important for parents who pay for holiday childcare.

At present parents not in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credits are entitled to help with their childcare costs through employer-supported vouchers. About 9 per cent of UK families get help with their childcare costs this way (House of Commons Library, 2014). Those receiving childcare vouchers can save up to £55 per week if they are basic rate taxpayers or higher rate taxpayers who joined a voucher scheme before 5 April 2011. Childcare vouchers can also be 'banked' and used at a time when childcare costs may be particularly high, for example, during the school holidays. The disadvantages of childcare vouchers are that only five per cent of employers offer them and not all childcare providers, particularly out-of-school clubs, accept them.

1 Department for Education and Employment and Department for Social Security, 1998.

Background

In 2013 the Government announced that it intends to phase out the present employer-supported childcare voucher scheme and replace it with a tax free 'voucher' of up to £2,000 per year in 2015 (HM Treasury, 2013). This will be an online system where parents bank their payments. For each £8 a parent pays in, the Government will add an additional £2 up to a maximum of £2,000 per year per child. In the 2014 Budget it was confirmed that this source of help would be open to all families with children under 12. This support will be available to all families outside the tax credit/Universal Credit system where parents work and whose gross household income is less than £300,000 per year (or £150,000 for a single parent).

This new help with childcare costs is welcome, although it will be families in the top half of the income distribution who will benefit most from this new voucher scheme. It may also cause more rapid price increases for parents as hard-pressed providers see extra money in parents' pockets as a chance to increase costs (Ben-Galim, 2014).

Alongside these proposals about holiday childcare there have been other social policy changes that have the potential to impact on holiday childcare. In all parts of Britain there is now discussion about the role of schools in providing childcare, prompted commitments to increasing school-based childcare from both the UK Government and the Labour party, as well as greater numbers of academies and free schools that offer these services to parents. From 2015 all schools in England will be able to set their own term and holiday dates, although the school year will still have to have a minimum 190 days of term time. Already, a number of schools have announced that they intend to cut the summer holidays back to four weeks in order to help parents who struggle with childcare. However, some educational leaders are suggesting that this move may increase parents' childcare difficulties by introducing variations in holiday dates within the same local authority. Clearly, this is an area that requires close monitoring.

These changes should also be seen against a backdrop of spending cuts to local authority budgets. In many parts of the country holiday childcare has been partly subsidised by local authorities – often to ensure that children are not left unsupervised over school holidays – and differing levels of subsidies account for some of the differences between holiday childcare costs between local authorities. However, pressure on budgets means that these subsidies have often been reduced or removed completely in some areas. Additionally, public funding for sports, cultural, open access play schemes and youth activities, which often act as substitute childcare for older children, has also seen significant cuts. The Family and Childcare Trust's annual holiday childcare report is set in context of these policy changes.

Methodology

The Family and Childcare Trust has carried out an annual survey of holiday childcare since 2002. The research, which examines costs and supply, is based on a survey to local authorities. This year we made some changes to the holiday childcare research methodology. In addition to the survey to local authorities we undertook an additional survey of parents and made some case study visits to holiday childcare schemes.

The local authority survey was sent out in May 2014 to all Family Information Services in England and Wales and all Childcare Information Services in Scotland. They were asked to complete a short questionnaire about the average price of holiday childcare projects in their area. The survey asked the price for group childcare, that is holiday clubs or play schemes. Some parents use childminders over the school holidays, but this survey did not look at their prices, as we already have already examined this in the Annual Childcare Costs Survey that we publish each spring.

The questionnaire asked for the average daily and weekly cost for full-time holiday childcare and the number of hours over which this care was provided. A distinction was made between maintained sector holiday childcare (local authority, school and other public sector) and childcare run by private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers. It is important to emphasise that this survey asks local authorities to report the price that parents pay for different forms of childcare in their area. This survey does not ask local authorities to estimate what services cost providers to deliver – this is likely to be a different amount than the prices information held because of subsidies and grants that some providers receive. Thus, this data cannot be used to represent the cost to providers of delivering holiday childcare provision.

We used the data about the cost of holiday childcare to calculate average regional weekly prices for maintained sector and PVI provision in England and average national prices for Scotland and Wales. We also calculated overall regional and national prices by weighting our figures for maintained sector and PVI provision. In England, Scotland and Wales most holiday childcare provision is run by the PVI sectors, although the proportions varies between local authorities. As Table One shows, childcare that is delivered by the PVI sector tends to be more expensive than that run by schools and local authorities. Our weighting formula takes into account the greater prominence of the PVI sector in delivering holiday childcare and enables us to come up with a more precise calculation of average holiday childcare costs.

As noted above, the Childcare Act 2006 obliges local authorities in England and Wales to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for working parents and those studying with the intention of returning to work. At the beginning of 2014 there was no equivalent legislation in Scotland, although the 2008 Early Years' Framework requires that local authorities have 'a strategic view of childcare accessibility' and has a longer-term objective that families have 'access to integrated pre-school and childcare services in every community matched to an assessment of local demand' (Scottish Government, 2008). In order to monitor whether local authorities are fulfilling these obligations, the survey asks whether there is sufficient holiday childcare for different groups of children: 4-7 year olds, 8-11 year olds, children aged 12 and over, disabled children, those living in rural areas and the children of working parents.

In order to ensure an adequate response rate in all the regions and nations of Britain, Freedom of Information Act requests were used to collect the information where the survey methodology had failed. Responses were eventually received from 177 local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales, representing an 87 per cent response rate overall and a minimum of 75 per cent response rate in each region or nation of Britain.

While holiday childcare represents a significant financial outlay to parents, it is inaccurate to argue that these prices are merely the result of childcare providers charging high fees to hard-pressed parents. Holiday childcare will always be expensive as it is labour intensive service. We felt that it is important to describe the activities of high quality holiday childcare providers in this report, and for this reason we made two field visits to holiday childcare projects.

We also wanted to understand the experiences of families in their search for holiday childcare. To this end we undertook an online survey of parents in May 2014 in partnership with Netmums, the UK's biggest parenting website. The survey probed family caring strategies over the school holidays, childcare expenditure and sources of financial help. It also looked at the ease of finding affordable holiday childcare at a location that was convenient, as well as the impact on families when holiday childcare was not available. Some 1,587 responses were received, with the educational profile of the respondents broadly corresponding with the overall population.

Holiday childcare provision

Finding suitable activities for mid-teens is difficult. They are too young to be left for a long time on their own but too old for childminders and clubs (Ronnie, father of two).

As noted above, parents use a mixture of informal and formal childcare over the school holidays. Their caring arrangements usually comprise a 'package' of parental care, shift-parenting, informal childcare from relatives and friends, as well as formal provision offered by childminders and holiday clubs. The *2014 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents* indicated 26 per cent of working parents used formal childcare during the school holidays (Department for Education, 2014a). The same survey shows that about 21 per cent used holiday clubs. Some parents also turn to registered childminders in addition to, or as an alternative to holiday clubs – childminders often have vacancies over the school holidays when their regular attenders are away. Childminder provision is most frequently used by families with children under eight. Parents may also use sports, cultural and youth work activities as de facto childcare, for older children for whom holiday clubs are not suitable, but who still need some supervision.

This survey looks at group-based holiday childcare, variously termed holiday play schemes, clubs or holiday projects. Most of them book in children on a daily or weekly basis, but a few are 'open access' which is drop in provision where children can turn up and undertake supervised play for as many hours as they wish.

We visited two holiday childcare projects: the Winchester Project in Swiss Cottage, London and Lewes YMCA in East Sussex. Both are voluntary sector organisations that run holiday childcare projects during school half-terms and over the Easter and summer holidays.

The Winchester Project – known as the Winch – was set up in the early 1970s in a disused public house. Today the Winch remains in the same building, although it has use of nearby sports facilities. The Winch has childcare places for up to 60 children over the school holidays. Its activities are structured and children have a choice of different activities, which include arts, crafts, drama, IT and sports, as well as time to relax. There are also trips out to local sites and wider, to museums and theme parks. The organisation offers after-school and holiday childcare and receives a small grant from the local authority to do this. The grant subsidises running costs and enables the Winch to offer some reduced price and free places on the after-school and holiday

schemes. There are designated places for children with disabilities and special educational needs, which forms part of their contract with the local authority.

Lewes YMCA is also a voluntary sector organisation and is part of Sussex Central YMCA which has been working with young people in the area since 1919. It has a spacious site which includes a garden and gym. Children have a choice of activities which include arts and crafts, baking and sports. They also have time to relax with their friends, in the garden, café or a secret den. As with the Winch it has some free places that are offered to vulnerable children that are funded by a grant from the local authority.

A variety of provision

The holiday childcare sector is diverse, in relation to its ownership, and in the quality and type of activities offered. This year's survey indicates that in England, Scotland and Wales some 22 per cent of holiday clubs were run by the maintained sector, mostly local authorities and schools, with the remaining 78 per cent run by the PVI sector. There are, however, large differences between local authorities in the proportions of provision offered by the maintained and PVI sectors. Both our survey and recent research from the Department for Education (2014b) indicated that there is less school-based provision per head of population in deprived areas, compared with the least deprived, with the latter showing 15 per cent of schools offered holiday childcare in the most deprived areas, compared with 20 per cent elsewhere.

Some maintained sector holiday childcare is subsidised. This can take the form of a direct grant from the local authority, school or another public body, an indirect subsidy through free use of school premises and equipment, or funding to offer free places to vulnerable children who may be at risk of neglect when not at school. This support is given in recognition that holiday childcare serves two important purposes – as well as providing childcare for working parents, it also offers structured activities to vulnerable children who might be at risk of being left alone over the school holidays.

Holiday childcare provision

While local authority and school budgets remain under pressure, over the last year there has been a small increase in the amount of maintained sector provision in England. Compared with the same local authorities in the previous year, there has been a 24 per cent increase in the number of maintained sector providers since 2013. This is welcome, although it should be noted that a much smaller proportion of holiday childcare is offered in the maintained sector. Additionally, in 35 per cent of local authorities in England and Wales, the numbers of PVI providers has fallen, so existing gaps in provision have not been closed.

There are some further problems associated with an expansion of maintained sector provision. As we discuss later, it can sometimes price out PVI provision. A further difficulty for working parents is that much maintained sector provision is not open for the whole working day. Generally, local authority and school provision starts later and closes earlier than that offered by the PVI sector which may be open for nine or ten hours every weekday.

Quality

Holiday clubs also differ in the quality of provision and the type of activities that they offer. Yet, there has been little consideration by policy makers in central and local government about what quality means for holiday childcare. This is an omission that needs to be addressed.

The Family and Childcare Trust consider that the quality of holiday as having two main components. The first concerns the play and development opportunities provided to children by the holiday childcare itself. The second component concerns the ability of holiday childcare to deliver wider aims, such as enabling parents to work.

Good quality in this area means children having a stimulating, rewarding, enjoyable and safe time, promoting their mental, physical and social development. A number of components contribute to this aspect of quality, including trained staff and a sufficient range of resources and spaces.

Access to outdoors spaces is important for children's physical development and for allowing a wider range of activities to take place. Access to transport and adequate staff numbers are crucial for being able to provide trips to external locations. The physical resources of a programme have a significant role in determining the quality of play and interactions that children are able to experience.

There are also significant human resource components to quality holiday childcare. Attentive and well qualified staff are crucial to encouraging children's play and development, providing support, preventing harm, resolving disputes or issues that might arise, and identifying any problems or issues that children might have. Staff to child ratios are a particularly important component of quality.

The second component of quality is the ability of holiday childcare to deliver wider aims, including enabling parents to work. The provision of pre- and post-holiday scheme breakfast or dinner clubs (or the capacity for early drop-offs and late pick-ups) is particularly important in this respect. But a number of issues can hinder the delivery of good quality holiday childcare. In general, budgetary pressure is the largest single challenge to delivering quality, as quality provision may well be more expensive for parents. Resources are needed for staff, materials and equipment and to organise trips. In practice, this means that a holiday club has to strike a difficult balance between quality and affordability.

The nature of holiday childcare can make staffing it challenging. Demand for this is subject to short term fluctuations because of parents making plans at the last minute, working part-time or having plans for their children outside of the holiday club for some weeks and not others. This creates a situation in which it can be hard to predict the number of staff that will be needed in advance and it can be a challenge to change staffing arrangements at short notice – finding good quality flexible staff can be very difficult for some schemes. One response to this has been to have holiday clubs working together to smooth out peaks and troughs in demand and supply. This has been achieved in the maintained sector, but the competition in the private sector makes cooperation more difficult.

The cost of holiday childcare

As soon as the holidays came, I couldn't pay the childminder, her fees were extortionate for the whole day. So she [daughter] used to go to my grandmother's – rather than my mum because my mum was working full-time. But since my grandmother died, there has been no-one to care for my daughter. I just can't afford the childminder or the club. So until she is older, I take unpaid leave over the summer holidays. We can't afford it and I would rather work (Debbie, mother of one).

In Britain, maintained sector holiday childcare now costs an average of £96.04 per week, compared with £118.65 per week in the PVI sector (Table one). These price differences are a result of subsidies and because holiday clubs provided by local authorities and schools often have access to free premises and equipment. Taking into account different patterns of ownership, the overall costs of one week of full-time (50 hours) of holiday childcare is now £114.51. This is a weighted cost which accounts for the greater proportion of holiday childcare provided by the PVI sector.

Overall, holiday childcare is 1.7 per cent more expensive than it was last year – again this is a weighted figure that takes into account ownership patterns. However, prices have fallen by 3.1 per cent in the maintained sector and risen by 2.7 per cent in the PVI sector. Table Two gives the regional changes in prices since 2013.

Table Two: Increase in holiday childcare costs over a 12 month period 2013–2014, by region and nation

Region/nation	Increase in costs in maintained (school, local authority) sector holiday club or play scheme	Increase in costs in private, voluntary and independent sector holiday club or play scheme	Increase in weighted costs
East of England	-28.9%	-10.3%	-15.3%
East Midlands	18.3%	12.8%	9.2%
Greater London	1.6%	10.9%	8.8%
North East	26.2%	-5.7%	0.3%
North West	5.8%	-2.6%	-3.4%
South East	3.3%	18.4%	15.8%
South West	-8%	3.8%	4.1%
West Midlands	8.9%	-15.2%	-0.5%
Yorkshire and Humberside	-1.6%	3.5%	-0.7%
England (Regional Average)	0.7%	2.5%	2.08
Wales	-27.2%	7.2%	2%
Scotland	-13.9%	0.5%	-0.2%
Britain average of regionals and nations	-3.1%	2.7%	1.7%

Source: Family and Childcare Trust Holiday Childcare Survey, 2014

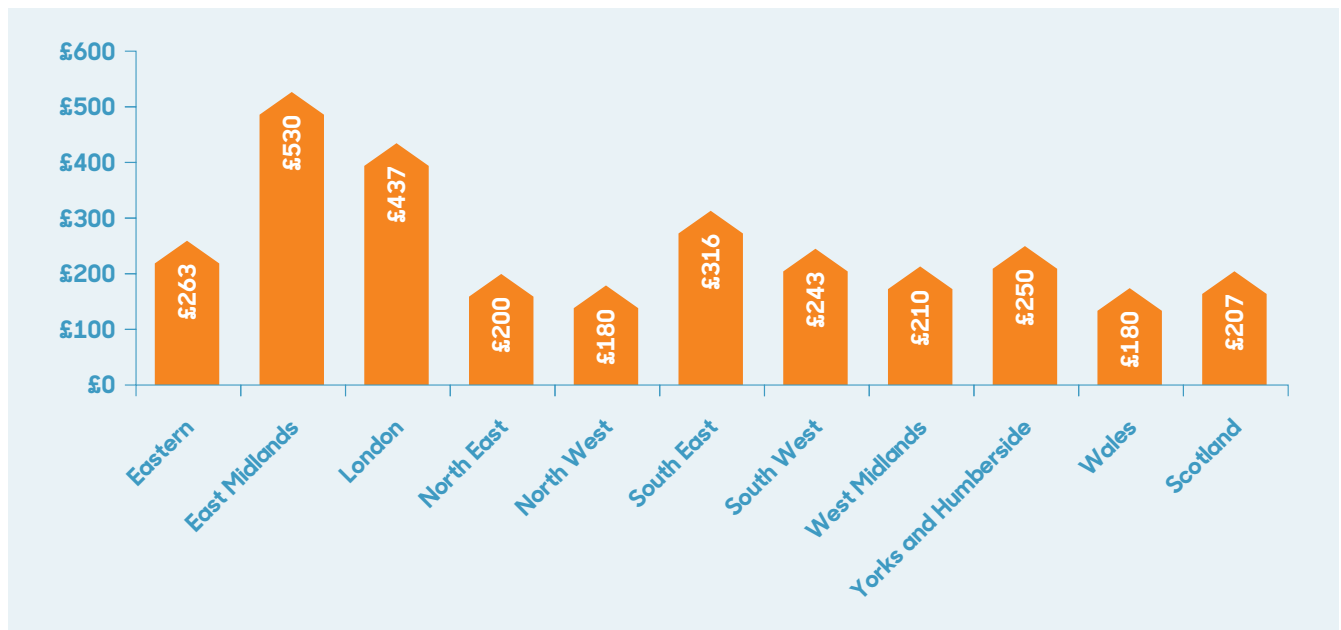
The cost of holiday childcare

Since 2009 the price of holiday childcare in the PVI sector has risen by 21 per cent and increase of 17 per cent in local authority and school provision. In 2009 parents were paying an average of £82.03 per week for childcare in the maintained sector and £98.04 per week for PVI provision.

The South East of England is the region with the most expensive holiday childcare. The most expensive

holiday club cost club cost £530 per week and was located in the East Midlands. Figure Two gives the most expensive holiday childcare clubs in each region and nation of Britain. There were 69 local authorities – out 177 in the survey – where of the most expensive holiday childcare projects exceeded the £175 limit which is the maximum level for help through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. (This means a parent gets 70 per cent of this or £122.50 per week).

Figure Three: Most expensive holiday childcare for full-time place per week, by region, 2014



Source: Family and Childcare Trust Holiday Childcare Survey, 2013

As already noted, holiday childcare is now more expensive in the PVI sector compared with local authority and school provision, although this was not the case in the past and in a few areas PVI provision is still cheaper than the maintained sector. These variations are much larger than the intra-regional differences in prices shown in Table One. Across Britain in the 'average' local authority, there is a £111.22 difference in price between the most expensive holiday club and the cheapest, meaning many parents face a holiday childcare costs lottery.

The cost of holiday childcare

Table Four: Average regional and national price difference between cheapest and most expensive holiday in each local authority, 2014

Region	Average local authority price difference
Eastern	£128.31
East Midlands	£159.61
London	£145.78
North East	£96.21
North West	£88.73
South East	£125.16
South West	£111.03
West Midlands	£106.12
Yorkshire and Humberside	£107.67
Scotland	£61.96
Wales	£92.81
Britain average of regions and nations	£111.12

Source: Family and Childcare Trust Holiday Childcare Survey, 2014

Local differences in prices have a number of causes. Some holiday childcare projects offer more trips and activities than others, so are more expensive. Some offer paid-for refreshments, while others do not. Some providers are open for longer hours than others, so they may have higher staff costs over the whole day. Conversely, hourly pay levels in the PVI sector tend to be lower than in the maintained sector, with wages being 22 per cent higher in maintained sector holiday than in the private sector in 2011. As noted above, fewer PVI providers receive grants from local authorities or the use of free premises and equipment. Those in the private sector also aim to make a profit which may also account for the higher price of provision in this sector.

These price variations raise important questions at a time when the costs of childcare are the subject of political and policy debate. Should schools be encouraged to offer more holiday childcare? What is the impact of increasing subsidised provision on the financial sustainability of the PVI sector? What action can be taken by the UK and devolved governments to level holiday childcare costs? How much profit should a private provider be allowed to make? How do countries outside the UK support and subsidise holiday childcare provision?

Many people might argue for more holiday childcare provision in the maintained sector, given the difference in cost. There are many advantages of doing this and

the Family and Childcare Trust welcomes the renewed focus on the role of schools in providing wrap-around and holiday childcare. However, increasing subsidised school-based holiday childcare risks undercutting local PVI provision and worsening gaps in provision. The record of the maintained sector in responding to the childcare needs of working parents is not as good as the PVI sector, as illustrated by more limited opening times in the maintained sector. If school-based holiday childcare is to be expanded, it must not be at the expense of childcare flexibility and its availability to working parents.

Outside the UK a number of other developed countries subsidise holiday childcare by giving money directly to providers, which is often termed supply-side funding. In turn, providers deliver free or low cost childcare, with better off parents paying more for this service. This contrasts with the UK where most public subsidies for holiday childcare are directed at parents. There are some benefits to supply-side funding as it can keep prices down. The receipt of funding can also be linked to minimum opening hours and to meeting quality standards, thus benefitting children and parents. To these ends the Family and Childcare Trust is asking for the UK Government to set up an independent review of childcare funding, which should consider means of simplification and a move to shifting greater proportions of state subsidy towards supply-side funding where money is channelled to providers. We are also calling for similar action in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Gaps in holiday childcare supply



*Childcare is scarce where I live and if I didn't book early I would be stuck
(Ruth, mother of two).*

The Childcare Act 2006 obliges all local authorities in England and Wales to provide sufficient childcare for working parents and those undertaking training or education with the intention of returning to work. Local authorities are also obliged to 'have regard' for disabled children.

In order to meet this duty, local authorities need to know about gaps in childcare provision, so they can intervene in the market. The Childcare Act 2006 and its statutory guidance thus require local authorities to assess childcare sufficiency. In Wales, childcare sufficiency assessments are undertaken every three years, with an annual update between the three year reporting period. In England, the legal obligation to assess childcare supply and demand has recently been amended, first in statutory guidance and then in the Children and Families Act 2014. Local authorities in England are now required to produce an annual report and action plan to explain how they are ensuring sufficient childcare in their area:

*"Report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents".
(Department for Education, 2012)*

There is no equivalent legislation to the Childcare Act 2006 in Scotland, although the 2008 Early Years' Framework requires that local authorities have "a strategic view of childcare accessibility" (Scottish Government, 2008). While more local authorities in Scotland are now looking at whether there is enough childcare for the under-fives, only nine of the 26 local authorities who replied to our survey had undertaken an assessment of the supply of holiday childcare in their area.

The survey asked local authorities to use their most recent childcare sufficiency data to estimate if they had sufficient childcare for different groups of children and the results are given in Table Five.

Gaps in holiday childcare supply

Table Five: Percentage of local authorities with sufficient childcare across the whole local authority for specific groups of children, 2014, with 2013 figures in brackets

Region/nation	Percentage of local authorities reporting sufficient holiday childcare for 4-7 year olds	Percentage of local authorities reporting sufficient holiday childcare for 8-11 year olds	Percentage of local authorities reporting sufficient holiday childcare for children aged 12 and above	Percentage of local authorities reporting sufficient holiday childcare for disabled children	Percentage of local authorities reporting sufficient holiday childcare for working parents
East of England	33% (27%)	22% (18%)	0% (9%)	0% (18%)	22% (27%)
East Midlands	22% (40%)	11% (20%)	11% (20%)	0% (0%)	22% (20%)
Greater London	33% (17%)	32% (26%)	9% (17%)	18% (13%)	23% (22%)
North East	45% (57%)	36% (42%)	18% (14%)	27% (28%)	45% (57%)
North West	58% (71%)	53% (57%)	32% (28%)	32% (50%)	58% (79%)
South East	24% (29%)	24% (29%)	6% (7%)	6% (14%)	18% (21%)
South West	38% (25%)	23% (25%)	0% (17%)	8% (0%)	15% (0%)
West Midlands	45% (30%)	18% (30%)	0% (20%)	18% (20%)	9% (30%)
Yorkshire and Humberside	23% (21%)	15% (21%)	8% (14%)	15% (7%)	15% (14%)
England (average for all local authorities)	37% (36%)	28% (30%)	11% (16%)	15% (18%)	27% (30%)
Wales	6% (16%)	6% (6%)	0% (0%)	6% (0%)	6% (16%)

Source: Family and Childcare Trust Holiday Childcare Survey, 2014

Only seven local authorities in England, three in Scotland and one in Wales had enough childcare for children who live in rural areas. It can be seen from Table Five that over the last year the gaps in provision have increased for many groups of children.

The obligation of local authorities to assess the sufficiency of childcare was introduced in 2008 in most parts of in England and Wales. It was in this year

that local authorities carried out their first childcare sufficiency assessments, which were meant to identify gaps in supply and contain action plans to ensure that these gaps in provision were filled. We reviewed our 2009 holiday childcare survey to look at how much progress had been made over a five year period in filling gaps. Table Six shows that over this five year period gaps in provision have increased substantially rather than decreased.

Table Six: Local authorities with enough holiday childcare for particular social groups in 2009 and 2014

	England 2009	England 2014	Wales 2009	Wales 2014
For 4-7 year olds	63%	37%	25%	5%
For 8- 11 year olds	54%	28%	31%	5%
For childcare aged 12 and over	20%	11%	6%	0%
For disabled children	20%	15%	19%	6%
For parents who work full-time	49%	27%	19%	6%

Gaps in holiday childcare supply

The Family and Childcare Trust is particularly concerned that such little progress has been made to meet the holiday childcare needs of older children, a group who are frequently forgotten in debates about 'childcare'. Activities for them are sometimes not viewed as 'childcare' and are not considered in childcare sufficiency reports. It is significant to note that 24 local authorities in England and 3 in Wales did not know if they had enough childcare for this group, as their sufficiency analysis did not include children over the age of 11.

Children of secondary school age may attend sports or cultural activities in the school holidays, or activities organised by local authority youth services which include some open access play schemes. This functions as de facto childcare. Much of this type of provision has seen extensive funding cuts since 2010. Analysis undertaken by the Family and Childcare Trust indicated that local authority youth service budgets had fallen by an average of 4.9 per cent between financial years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. This often results in severe reductions to de facto childcare for older children, and leaves more children unsupervised over the school holidays. For this reason, the Family and Childcare Trust is calling on the Department for Education to work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office to ensure that there is enough de facto childcare for older children. We are calling for similar cross-departmental collaboration to take place in Scotland and Wales.

We are finding it extremely difficult to manage during the school holidays as we are reliant on elderly grandparents to help with childcare and they find it increasingly difficult physically to care for our son. We are now at the point where I am faced with having to give up work due to lack of suitable childcare (Lisa, parent and carer, 2014).

Disabled children

Tables Five and Six show that families with disabled children are another group who find it difficult to find childcare. In 2014, the Family and Childcare Trust

supported a Parliamentary Inquiry into childcare for disabled children. There was consensus among Inquiry respondents that older disabled children and young people are worse served by existing provision (Contact a Family, 2014). As non-disabled children access childcare provision less once they are in secondary school, the mainstream childcare market is relatively limited and fewer options exist for disabled young people.

Providing childcare to this group also presents additional challenges. Numbers of older children are often low which challenges the sustainability of settings. The physical size of older children can increase requirements for manual handling training and can make some providers reluctant to take on children with challenging behaviour or developmental impairments. It is also a greater challenge to provide quality childcare that offers opportunities for disabled children to do similar activities to their peers, so parents are sometimes reluctant to use provision that does not help their children thrive.

Respondents also identified childcare provision during the school holidays and before and after the school day as particular problems to families with disabled children. Mainstream schools are increasingly open for extended school days to provide breakfast clubs and after school care but these settings are often not inclusive, even to pupils attending the school during the day. One to one care and other school based support is typically not extended beyond school hours.

Far fewer special schools offer wraparound care, most likely because the numbers of families accessing the support would be low and it is harder to find additional staff to cover extended hours. This means children who attend these schools must travel to another childcare setting or access home-based care. Many respondents to the Inquiry identified a failure to take advantage of special school facilities and resources as an issue limiting childcare provision. Parents told the Inquiry that outside of term time holiday schemes were often offered sporadically during the holidays and so did not offer continuity of care through the school holidays. Holiday provision was often limited to times of the day that did not cover parents' work schedules. For children in secondary school, provision was even more limited as many settings only offer places to children up to the age of 11. Some disabled older children were expected to attend the same provision as much younger children and take part in the same activities they did when younger. For all holiday provision, availability was limited and often had to be secured a long time in advance.

Gaps in holiday childcare supply

Many disabled young people experience services that are not age appropriate or do not help them emulate the opportunities their non-disabled peers enjoy. Parents want provision for their children at this age to help them thrive by developing their independence and providing flexibility and variety. Yet much available provision does not live up to this expectation.

Disabled young people told the Inquiry what they want out of childcare and supervised activities is the opportunity to do activities other teenagers may take for granted. They wanted to enjoy spending time with their friends, learn new skills, have fun and do things independently. To meet these aspirations, disabled young people often want options to do activities in structured settings, with personal assistants in their own home or in small buddy groups.

The trends shown in Tables Five and Six are disappointing. Since the passage of the Childcare Act 2006 there has been little progress in England and Wales to ensure that gaps in provision are filled. There are a number of reasons that explain this failure to close gaps in provision. All childcare is provided by a mixed market of private, not-for-profit and public sector providers and is bound by rules to determine its quality. These requirements, rightly, set a fixed minimum cost for providers. Most for-profit childcare providers operate on low profit margins that are highly sensitive to small changes in income or outgoings.

A local community might almost reach market saturation for childcare, or there might be services that meet mainstream needs, but investment in additional childcare places for particular types of need – for example, disabled children or in sparsely-populated rural areas – is unlikely to be delivered in a free market. The current economic climate and difficulties securing credit may put off providers from setting up new schemes.

A further reason that childcare gaps persist is that providers may lack information about potential local markets for these services. If local authority childcare sufficiency reports fail to examine for the need for childcare outside normal office hours, then providers will not know if there is a market for this provision. Another emerging trend highlighted in our survey is the growing number of local authorities whose childcare sufficiency analysis is inadequate or not undertaken at all. This is a particular problem in Scotland where there is no specific obligation to assess childcare sufficiency, but we have also identified 20 local authorities in England which have failed to undertake and publish childcare sufficiency analysis since 2011. These local



authorities did not know if they had enough childcare or not, so cannot intervene to fill gaps in provision. This is clearly unsatisfactory – these local authorities are not fulfilling their legal obligations. The Family and Childcare Trust believes that the Department for Education – and devolved governments in Scotland and Wales – needs to hold these local authorities to account and support them to fill gaps in provision.

In England and Wales many childcare sufficiency reports also lack detailed action plans that identify how gaps in provision might be filled and this is a further reason that gaps in provision remain. At a national and local level childcare for older children has not attracted the attention that is given to childcare for under-fives. It is easy for the needs of school-age children to be overlooked and for local authorities not to prioritise holiday childcare. Again, it is important that local authorities are held to account for their failures to ensure sufficient childcare.

But the process of intervention in the holiday childcare market can be fraught with difficulties. In the past, some local authorities responded to gaps in provision by setting up their own holiday childcare schemes. Such provision is often provided at a lower price than that PVI provision, as running costs may be subsidised or the holiday project may use free premises. In some cases subsidised public sector holiday risks undercutting PVI provision. Where local authorities and schools do deliver their own provision they need to ensure that they do not price other providers out of the market. What is needed is leadership from central government and a considered strategy that helps local authorities fulfil their legal obligations.

The impact of the holiday childcare lottery on families

Last year my husband left his job and took a year out specifically to look after our children. This year we will only have one week together as a family in the whole year as the rest of our holiday entitlement is needed to be spread over all the days holiday (Jane, mother of two).

The results of our local authority survey showed the high costs of holiday childcare and gaps in provision in all parts of Britain. While some parents find high quality and affordable childcare in a location that is convenient for them, other parents face a lottery of variable costs and acute shortages of childcare. This year, we wanted to understand the impact that this had on families so working with Netmums we undertook an online survey of parents in May 2014. The respondents appear to be a representative sample of the parental population in respect both to their qualifications profile and that nine per cent received help with their childcare costs through tax credits. (Nationally, HMRC data suggests that eight per cent of families receive help with their childcare costs this way (HMRC (2014)).

Parents described a holiday childcare lottery of large differences in prices and gaps in provision, with 35 per cent of parents in our survey finding it difficult or very difficult to find holiday childcare they could afford. Some 28 per cent of parents reported difficulties finding holiday childcare at a convenient location. Families often found it hardest to cater for 12-14 year olds, who still require supervision, but for whom holiday clubs are not appropriate.

Not all parents have employers who are sympathetic to parents' caring obligations, with 28 per cent of survey respondents reporting their employer had

refused a requests to change work arrangements over the holidays. Some 22 per cent of parents reported that their employer was unsympathetic or very unsympathetic to requests to change working hours over school or nursery periods. The least-well qualified parents were three times more likely to report an unsympathetic boss, suggesting that highly qualified parents have greater negotiating power with their employer. For this reason the Family and Childcare Trust is asking the Government to take action to ensure that all parents benefit from family friendly work practices such as flexible working or term-time only contracts.

Perhaps the most shocking finding of the survey were the strategies that parents took to ensure they could care for their children in the absence of holiday childcare. Shift-parenting was common and some parents described the negative impacts of this on family relationships. A lack of holiday childcare had forced many parents into courses of action that risked damaging their career prospects and finances, with 25 per cent reporting they had been forced to cut their hours of work during school holidays and 17 per cent stating they had taken days off sick to cover holiday childcare. An additional 12 per cent of parents had given up a job because they could not find holiday childcare (Figure Seven).

Figure Seven: Impact of lack of affordable holiday childcare on family life

I have had to reduce my hours of work over school or nursery holidays.	25.2%
I have had to arrange flexible working over the holidays.	26.6%
I have had to take unpaid leave.	30.9%
I have sometimes had to take days off sick in order to cover childcare.	17.1%
I have had to give up my job because I could not find suitable holiday childcare.	11.9%
I have had to ask friends or relative to look after my children.	44.4%
My partner and I have had to use up our leave on childcare and this means we have not been able to take a joint holiday.	26.8%
I have gone into debt or taken a loan because I could not afford holiday childcare.	5.1%
We have sometimes left our younger children home alone without supervision.	0.6%

N=1,587

Source: Netmums survey for the Family and Childcare Trust, 2014

The impact of the holiday childcare lottery on families

This does not only affect families, but has a wider impact on workplaces and the economy. Some 17 per cent of parents admitted to taking sick leave in order to cover childcare over the holidays. If this pattern applied to all UK parents, one day missed to cover childcare every year represents nearly 900,000 days of avoidable absence every year and costs the UK economy nearly £100 million every year².

In April 2014 an estimated 27.5 per cent of the UK's female working-age population was economically inactive, many of them because of caring responsibilities. Maternal employment rates in the UK are lower than many other developed countries, particularly for low skilled workers (Thompson and Ben-Galim, 2014). Frequently mothers who have coped with childcare arrangements when their children were in nurseries find that school holiday childcare is an unsurmountable barrier to work (ibid). This observation was supported by our survey results with nearly 12 per

cent of parents saying that they had given up work because they could not find holiday childcare (Table Seven). Such a move is likely to have a major impact on family finances as well as the broader economy. The impact of parents leaving the labour market because childcare is unaffordable or unavailable represents a loss of tax revenue and skills, often set alongside increased benefit payments. Thompson and Ben-Galim (2014) calculate that even a one per cent increase in maternal employment would result in a net gain to the exchequer of £200 million per year. This is a powerful argument for investing in holiday childcare.

² Based on average gross weekly earnings for 2013 of £517 per week.



Fixing holiday childcare



The results of our 2014 holiday childcare survey shows increasing costs which are coupled with severe – and increasing – shortages in some parts of Britain, particularly for older children, disabled children, children in Wales and those in rural areas. This has a major impact on both family wellbeing and the wider economy.

Across Britain all of the major political parties have recognised the importance of high quality and affordable childcare for families. In particular, new proposals have focussed on making childcare more affordable for working parents. By 2016 there will be increases in the level of childcare support through Universal Credit and the new voucher system. This is welcome, but it is a short-term solution that does not address many of the other childcare difficulties faced by parents, in particular gaps in provision that have worsened rather than improved since the Childcare Act 2006. Parents' needs for childcare do not end when their children start school, but for too long the childcare needs of this group have been forgotten or marginalised. The Family and Childcare Trust believes that it is time to rethink childcare for school-age children. We believe that there are a number of areas for action.

- ▶ The Government should ensure that all parents benefit from family friendly work by putting in place an information campaign for parents on their rights and entitlements at work.

- ▶ Where there is insufficient holiday childcare, central government should help local authorities fill these gaps and work with parents to hold them to account if they fail to do so.
- ▶ In England, local authorities and the Education Funding Agency should work with schools to make sure their premises and facilities are used to provide childcare and activities over holiday periods.
- ▶ In England, the Department for Education should work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office to ensure sufficient de facto childcare for older children.
- ▶ We call for similar action in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- ▶ The Government should commit to a new childcare strategy covering under-fives and children of school age. As part of this, it should set up an independent review of childcare funding that delivers the affordable and accessible childcare that parents and employers need.

For too long, the childcare of school-age children has felt like a forgotten issue. The run up to the next election is an opportunity to address this and commit to a long-term strategy that delivers for parents, employers, the economy and crucially, for children.

Bibliography

Ben-Galim (2014) *No more baby steps: a strategy for revolutionising childcare*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research

Contact a Family (2014) *Parliamentary Inquiry into childcare for disabled children*, London: Contact a Family

Department for Education (DfE) (2012) *Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on the Delivery of Free Early education for Three and Four Year Olds and Securing Sufficient Childcare*, London: DfE

ibid (2014a) *Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents*, London: DfE

ibid (2014b) *Primary schools providing access to out of school care*, London: DfE

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and Department for Social Security (DSS) (1998) *Meeting the Childcare Challenge; A strategy and consultation*, London: DfEE and DSS

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) *Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics Geographical Analysis April 2014*, London: HMRC

HM Treasury (2004) *Choice for parents: the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare*, London: the Stationery Office

HM Treasury (2013) *Tax-Free Childcare: consultation on design and implementation*, London: HM Treasury

House of Commons Library (2014) *Tax Relief for Childcare*, London: House of Commons

Rutter, J. (2013) *Holiday Childcare Survey*, London: Family and Childcare Trust, 2013

Scottish Government (2008) *Early Years Framework*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

Thompson, S. and Ben-Galim, D. (2014) *Childmind the Gap: reforming childcare to help mothers into work*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research

Acknowledgements

The Family and Childcare Trust would like to thank all local authority staff who helped compile the data for this survey. In particular we are grateful to Family Information Services in local authorities for their support in the research. We would also like to thank Netmums staff who helped with the parents' survey, the Winchester Project, the Lewes YMCA and all the families who took the time to share their views with us. We are also grateful to Computershare Voucher Services and Community Playthings who have funded this research and its dissemination,

About the authors

Jill Rutter is Head of Research and Policy at the Family and Childcare Trust. Previously Jill was a senior research fellow in migration at the Institute for Public Policy Research. Educated at Oxford University and London University's Institute of Education, Jill has also lectured at London Metropolitan University, worked in as a policy advisor at the Refugee Council and as a secondary school teacher. Her publications include *Refugee Children in the UK* (Open University Press, 2006), *Informal Childcare; Choice or Chance* (Family and Childcare Trust, 2012) and *Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion in the UK* (Policy Press, 2015, forthcoming).

Duncan Lugton is Policy and Research Assistant at the Family and Childcare Trust. He recently graduated with an MA in Philosophy from Brandeis University in America and has a BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from Oxford University. Before working at the Family and Childcare Trust, Duncan was Policy and Campaigns Intern at Sue Ryder.

About the Family and Childcare Trust

The Family and Childcare Trust works to make the UK a family friendly society where all parents and children have the resources they need to thrive. The charity was formed in 2013 as a result of a merger between Daycare Trust and the Family and Parenting Institute. Collectively both organisations have almost 40 years' experience of policy and campaigning on issues affecting families. The Family and Childcare Trust undertakes research and policy advocacy. It also works with parents, businesses and government in order to serve families better.

About Computershare Voucher Services

Computershare Voucher Services (CVS) is the UK's largest dedicated childcare voucher provider, responsible for the administration, management and development of childcare vouchers, an employee benefit available to all eligible working parents. CVS currently works with over 100,000 working parents, more than 14,000 organisations and over 87,000 carers each month.

CVS has vast experience of the childcare vouchers industry, reinforced by significant technology enhancements which benefit its diverse customer base, spanning every sector, from some of the UK's largest corporations to SMEs.

CVS is a founding member of the Childcare Voucher Providers Association (CVPA) which represents childcare voucher providers and sets the benchmark for standards in the industry through its Code of Practice, to ensure carers, parents and employers receive the highest standard of service from childcare voucher providers.



For more information visit:
www.computersharevoucherservices.com

About Community Playthings

A sound understanding of child development underpins Community Playthings' product design. Manufactured in the UK, furniture and equipment supports children's creativity, learning and play in schools and nurseries across the private, voluntary and public sectors.

In collaboration with leading educators and early years consultants, Community Playthings also publishes authoritative staff training resources. The most recent releases are *The irresistible classroom* and *A good place to be Two*.



Community Playthings has been creating child-friendly environments for over 50 years. For more information, visit: www.communityplaythings.co.uk